MED. LIBRARY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

KINGTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1925.

This is a Survey Report and will follow the arrangement suggested in the Appendix to Circular 648 as far as applicable to a small Urban area.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

859 acres in extent, the population in 1921 was 1688 and estimated in 1925 as 1704.
The District lies largely in the valley of the small river Arrow but is undulatory in character.
The number of inhabited houses in 1921 was 451 and the separate occupiers in that year numbered
The rateable value is £7767, the sum represented by a penny rate being only £27 - 9 - 0.
The area is a small border Market town wholly dependent on Agriculture, practically, and the social conditions are those usual in similar areas; certainly, there is no particular occupation which has a prejudicial effect on the Public Health.
VITAL STATISTICS. BIRTHS ; these numbered 38, - 16 males and 22 females - which gives a birth rate of 22.3 per 1000 population; of the 38 births, 2 were illegitimate giving and illegitimate birth rate of .1 per 1000 population.
DEATHS; There were 31 deaths of persons belonging to the area, - 19 being males and 12 females - giving a death rate of 18.2 per 1000, and exceptionally high one for such a district.
The particular causes of death provide no explanation of this high rate ; Zymotic diseases did not claim any death; Influenza did not; Tuberculous diseases 1 only; Infantile diseases only 1; Cancer (Malignant diseases) caused 5 deaths in all; it must be due only to the effect of one or two deaths more than usual, on the small figures relating to this area.
INFANTILE MORTALITY; 1 death occurred at 19 days of age from Congenital Heart disease.
To revert to the prescribed order; the amount of POOR LAW RELIEF is difficult to obtain for it is but a small part of one Union in two Counties, including nearly 40 parishes; the amount of poor law relief must, however, be very small because of the sparsity of the population.
There is no HOSPITAL at which gratuitous medical or surgical relief is afforded; there is a small Cottage Hospital with 6 or 7 beds, with a local staff; admission to this is by subscriber's ticket though no difficulty occurs in receiving urgent cases; there are no noteworthy causes of sickness nor, as stated above, are there any conditions of occupation which appear to have a prejudicial effect on health.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

TUBERCULOSIS. The Sanatorium at Nieuport, (not ~~within~~ in this area but within 4 or 5 miles of it) is provided for cases of this disease, by the Herefordshire County Council and is available for this district. The only other Hospital is the Joint Kington Urban and Rural Isolation Hospital which is 2 miles away and just within the Rural area; this though but rarely used, has been of the greatest value but it would be difficult to deal with more than one kind of serious infectious disease at the same time. This hospital is managed by a Joint Committee of the Urban and

Rural Councils by whom a horse brougham is provided as a convenient ambulance for infectious cases. No other ambulance is available.

Clinics and Treatment Centres. Kington is a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre for consultation and sight treatment; its work covers an area of 2 or 3 miles from the town and includes the whole of the Urban District and part of the Rural; it is managed by a small voluntary Committee, meets fortnightly, is invariably attended by one of the County Medical Staff, one or other of the district nurses and by the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer who happens to be an old qualified nurse. This has done and is doing excellent work as is shown by the attached copy of the Centre's report to the County Council which body makes a grant to the Centre of £5 per annum; this with a few voluntary donations constitute the whole income. Infant

Copy of the report of the work of the Kington Welfare Centre, for the year ended Dec. 31st 1925.

(1)	No. of infants attended (under 2 yrs.)	35
(2)	. . attendances of these infants	225
(3)	. . children, ages 2 to 5 yrs.	13
(4)	. . attendances of these (2 to 5)	99
(5)	Average daily attendance at all ages up to 5 yrs.	12.5
(6)	No. of children who were breast fed entirely	5
(7)	Artificial food used	Milkal, Virol.
(8)	Amount received for artificial foods, Milkal	£30-5-0
	Virol	£ 2-4-3
	.. .. .. Clothing etc. supplied	£9-12-8.
(9)	No. in attendance at end of year, under 2 yrs.	25
	. . .. , over 2 yrs.	10
(10)	Ante natal cases (consultations)	5
	. .. .. (attendances)	12

N.B. One of the district nurses regularly attends the Centre and personally advises in many ante natal cases at their homes.

Signed

Hon. Sec., & Treasr.

April 1926.

end of copy report.

There are no day nurses nor school Clinics.

A Tuberculosis dispensary is provided in the Town by the Herefordshire County Council and this serves a large area; one of the County Tuberculosis officers attends this Dispensary every other week together with the local Health Visitor who is stationed at Kington but provided by the County Council.

Public Health Officers provided by the Local Authority. The only two provided are the Medical officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector. The old Sanitary Inspector (unqualified), who was also Surveyor, was seriously ill from January until his death in June. During this time his son, also unqualified, was accepted as substitute for his father until September when another Inspector was appointed; he, too, was not qualified and his appointment was not sanctioned by the Ministry but he continued in office until well into 1926 a though the Exchequer grant in aid of his salary has been withheld. In the meantime I, as Medical Officer of Health, was appointed Inspector under the Public Health Meat Regulations.

Nursing in the Home. There are two resident district nurses for general work, appointed by the Local Nursing Association whose funds are assisted by County Council grants; these nurses are not allowed to attend infectious sickness but should there be an accidental contact with such or a suspicion of infection, the Sanitary Inspector sees to the immediate and proper disinfection of the Nurse's clothing etc.
Midwives. There are no midwives subsidised by the District Council, but there are three qualified midwives practising in the area; one of these, a private one, resides 5 miles off, the other two are the district nurses referred to above, these latter attended during the year in this area 20 midwifery cases in sole charge and 12 others at which a doctor was present.
Chemical Work. This is almost wholly undertaken at the County laboratory to which samples of water are frequently sent for analysis and report.
Legislation in force. The Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890, Part ~~III~~ III, was adopted on June 8th., 1891; byelaws relating to cleansing of pavements, earthcloset, privies, ashpits, and cesspools; nuisances, common lodging-houses, slaughterhouses and new streets and buildings are in force, the last named were recently revised, allowed by the Ministry and sealed by the Council on January 18th. 1926.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water. The town supply is practically wholly from the Council's Waterworks which were purchased from the Kington Water Company some few years since; the supply is constant and the use of this supply has now become so general that it may be taken, either by private supply or stand pipe, as being in very general use throughout the whole area; many of the old shallow wells have been closed and few remain in use. There is a slight use of water from the well and a public pump in the middle of the roadway at the Cross in the middle of the town; frequent examinations of this water have failed to disclose any evidence of pollution, but its use becomes less and less and it will probably soon cease to be of public utility.
The Council's constant supply is from springs issuing from a hill in that small local area commonly known, and marked on the Ordnance Map, as "Crooked Well". Great confusion has arisen from this because there is a some built uncovered tank, also named the "Crooked Well" which receives the overflow from those springs supplying the town and some other side springs; the springs which are taken for the town supply are collected into a 5 inch pipe through which the water is passed into the pumping station a few yards away and thence to the reservoirs for distribution.
Unquestionable, the water in the open tank (the "Crooked Well") is insufficiently protected, though there is a constant overflow from it; it is also beyond doubt that the few local inhabitants who dip their buckets in this stone tank would deeply resent any interference with it. At the time of writing this the Council at my suggestion are seriously considering the possibility of the Town supply being contaminated in any way through this open stone tank, and they have asked a competent Water Engineer to advise them thereon. The quality of the Town

pollution.
Rivers and Streams. Two small streams pass through the town; there is no pollution of these in a general sense but occupiers of premises here and there appear to think a water course is a fitting receptacle for all kinds of rubbish and objectionable material; notices will be posted calling attention to this.
Drainage and Sewerage. The town is sewered by a 15" to 18" main from the Church to the Outfall Works, a distance of about a mile. Into this main run several contributory sewers and drains, 9" to 12" in diameter, all emptying eventually into the straining tanks, a short distance below the town; the sewage is thence passed on to filter beds of which there are 6 available. These works were under the special charge of the late Surveyor (Mr. Price) and were allowed to get somewhat out of order structurally; the filter beds have been thoroughly cleaned, the bolts and general woodwork have been put in order and the outfall works can now be described as satisfactory.
It was found impracticable to bring into this system of sewerage two small portions of this area, one known as Crooked Well, the other as Headbrook and there are houses outside the town not served by the system; these latter number about 130 and many of these, it should be noted, have good closet accomodation, the houses being separate and more or less bounded by land. In Headbrook as in Crooked Well there are many water closets discharging on to land surrounding the dwellings without any offensive result and the conditions improve yearly in this respect as is best shown in the following paragraph.
Closet Accomodation. This is the more easily dealt with by repeating the figures which I gave in my report on housing on January 21st. 1920, and comparing these with present day figures;

	1920.	1925.
Number of dwelling houses in whole area	451	464
Number of these served with W.C.'s	203	285
Number served with pits within town sewer area.	116	53
Number served with pits (a very few buckets) outside town sewer area.	132	131

From this it will be seen that there is a decrease in the number of old privy pits and an increase in that of water closets and this marks the definite policy of the Council towards abolishing, as far as possible, all insanitary types of closet accomodation.
Scavenging. Cleansing of earth closets, privies, ashpits and cesspools is not undertaken by the Council but house refuse is removed by the Council's carts from every requiring house on two days weekly; such refuse is put ready by the occupier as early as possible but it must be confessed that the variety of receptacles is not picturesque; the whole of this refuse is carted to the town tip half a mile below the town where, as far as possible, it is burnt.
Sanitary Inspection of the area. I am unable to attach any report to the Sanitary Inspector (Price) because of his serious illness which terminated fatally in June; in that six months his son, with no experience, did such routine work as he could

until the present Inspector (Mr. Johnson), who has no Sanitary certificate, was appointed in September; practically, therefore the inspections made and informal notices served were through me until nearly the end of the year. Personally, I made upwards of 500 visits, inspections etc. in the course of the whole year; no formal legal action was necessary.
Smoke abatement. No action has been found necessary in this matter.
The premises and occupations controllable by byelaws or regulations, are as follows :-

4 Slaughterhouses (private).
1 Common Lodging House.
6 Bakehouses (1 a factory bakehouse).
5 Meatshops.
2 Dairies.
2 Factories, Strictly speaking.
30 Workshops.

The Slaughterhouses and Meatshops will be referred to below; the Common Lodging House is, happily, closed; the dairies will be dealt with under milk; the 6 bakehouses have been regularly inspected and satisfactorily kept. The 2 Factories are small, give little employment and have disclosed no defects. The Workshops are of the type attached to small shops, e.g. tailors' bootmakers', garages, etc. There are no outworkers, no offensive trades and no underground sleeping rooms.
Schools. There is a public elementary and 1 secondary school, both are in good sanitary condition, both have the town water supply laid on and water closets; no action has been necessary for preventing the spread of infectious disease.

HOUSING.

(1). General housing conditions in the area.

(1) It can certainly be said that no occupied house is unfit for human habitation, taking a reasonable standard. The housing conditions have generally improved.
(2) There is no excess of houses for the working class, there may be, possibly, a shortage of a few working class dwellings if these could be let at a moderate rental; this is not urgent, however. It must not be forgotten that the district offers no special employment other than agriculture and the population has shown a steady decrease which promises to continue.

(II) Overcrowding. There is no overcrowding in the area.
(III) Fitness of Houses.

(1) (a) The general standard has unquestionable improved.
(b) The defects found have been largely due to old privy pits which have been and are being converted to W.C's.
(c) Only in that sense have these houses lacked proper management but in many instances these defects are due to the neglect of tenants.

(2) General action taken as regards unfit houses;
(a) & (b) by the light of the above (1) it will be

seen that no general action has been required as regards unfit houses.

(3) The only difficulty found in remedying these defects is with regard to the cost of these conversions; gradually, however, owners are realising that these are required and must be efficiently made.

(4) The possession of the waterworks has, of course, improved the conditions affecting housing.

(IV) Unhealthy areas. There is no unhealthy area.

(V) Byelaws relating to houses etc. New byelaws with respect to new buildings (and) streets) have been recently (April, 1926) allowed by the Ministry.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Number of new houses erected during the year,

(a) Total. 1

(b) With State assistance. 0

(1) Unfit dwelling houses.

Inspection .(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 11 specially

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Regulations 1910 or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925. 5

(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. 0

(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found taxks not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human occupation. 0

(2) Remedy of defects without service of formal notices.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers. 2

(3) Action under Statutory powers.

A. - Proceedings under the Housing Act 1925.

B. - Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied. 6

(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices . . (a) by owners, 6

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners, 0

C.- Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act 1925

(1), (2), (3), (4), (5). Nil.

In this connection it should be noted that practically every house in the area is recorded and the conditions of the same are personally known to me throughout.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply.- The number of registered retail milksellers is 11; only 2 of these have dairies within the area, 2 sell from bakers' shops and the other 7 have their sheds and dairies in the Kington Rural area.
The wholesome character of the milk supplied is beyond question; more care is given by outsiders tonthe methods of delivery and distribution, supervision of which is constant. The dairies and shedding in the area are satisfactorily kept and (i) there have been no tuberculous cattle nor milk; (ii) no special ~~designation~~ designation licenses have been granted; (iii) there have been ~~no~~ no refusals nor revocation of licenses and (iv) there have been no bacterial examinations of samples.
(b) Meat. Butchers have their regular times of slaughtering as notified on special forms to me; these are adhered to except in special cases in which an immediate notice is sent to me as meat Inspector. I have constantly visited the slaughterhouses at all times and found nothing to complain of. As to meat shops there are now 5 in all, 4 being in the hands of the slaughterhouse licensees and 1 a chilled meat shop; 2 of these have glass fronts and I hope to get all similarly protected, seeing that the fronts adjoin the main thoroughfare. Otherwise, the shops, stalls and vehicles are satisfactorily kept. There are no public slaughterhouses.

Private slaughterhouses.	in 1920	in Jan. 1925	in Dec 1925
Registered	5	5	4
Licensed	0	0	0
Total	5	5	4

One renewal was refused on my report.
(c) Other foods. - 1 crate of broccoli and 1 barrel of American apples which were reported to me by the Greengrocers to whom consigned, I found unfit for food and caused to be destroyed.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

In the whole period since 1920 there has been no general epidemic of the more serious of the notifiable infectious diseases. Measles has now and again been prevalent and whooping cough occasionally. Diphtheria has provided the largest number of cases but in scattered places and with only one or two fatalities in the whole period. Diphtheria antitoxin is stored by me for immediate use when applied for. One case only (a fatal one) of Encephalitis lethargica was notified but it was a very doubtful one; the patient's life history was well known to me. Only Pneumonia cases have been notified under the regulations ~~of 1919~~ of 1919. Bacteriological examinations are made at the County

No action has been necessary as to tuberculous employees in the milk trade, nor has any action been necessary under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

H.Harding,

Medical Officer of Health.